

PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE,  
MAINTENANCE HANGAR  
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 2763)  
Connecticut Road Between California and Connecticut Streets  
Plattsburgh  
Clinton County  
New York

HAER No. NY-326-O

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE, MAINTENANCE HANGAR (Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 2763)

HAER No. NY-326-O

**Location:** Arizona Avenue Between California and Connecticut Streets,  
Plattsburgh, Clinton County, New York.

UTM: 18.622700.4945080  
Quad: Plattsburgh, NY-VT, 1:24,000 (1966)

**Date of Construction:** 1956

**Architect:** Kuljian Corporation, Philadelphia, PA

**Present Owner:** United States Air Force

**Present Use:** Vacant/Storage

**Significance:** During the Cold War, Building No. 2763 housed an organizational maintenance shop space, aircraft corrosion control space, and weapons systems maintenance management facility space.

**Project Information:** Building No. 2763 at Plattsburgh Air Force Base (AFB) is being documented in accordance with HAER standards to mitigate for the potential adverse effects of transferring deed of title to the property from federal ownership. The property transfer is a result of the disposal and reuse of Plattsburgh AFB, pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1993. The mitigation is a stipulation of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the U.S. Air Force, the New York State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (October 2000).

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Colton, CA 92324

**Summary Description of Maintenance Hangar, (Plattsburgh Air Force Base Building No. 2763)**

**Layout**

At 166,367 square feet of usable floor area, Building No. 2763 is the largest building within the flightline area. The hangar has a double cantilever frame and is clad in corrugated metal siding painted beige with brown trim. This building has a flat roof and a nearly rectangular plan with small offsets at the corners where the frames for the hangar doors extend beyond the building.

The north and south facades are nearly identical and are divided into three aircraft service bays. These bays retain their original steel and glass sliding hangar doors that extend almost the entire length of the facades. The hangar doors are hung on a metal frame and run on a metal track. These doors can be opened either electrically or manually and have a braking system. The doors have ribbon windows that extend across the façade near the roofline; beneath these ribbon windows are four sets of equally spaced ribbon windows between the hangar service bays.

The east façade has a one-story, flat roof addition with factory-style metal sash windows; this addition once housed air compressors. The west façade has a covered entrance with a set of single light doors; to the left of those doors are double metal doors and another single metal personnel door. This façade has ghost marks of an earlier maintenance shop addition that was demolished. Off this façade was a small electric power station building (Building No. 2764) and a Fairchild bombing competition championship monument (Building No. 2765) that have both been removed.

The hangar's unique double-cantilevered riveted steel frame allows for large open spaces within the building's interior. The cantilevered sections are supported by four equally spaced steel towers that extend down the center of the building; at the base of each tower are one-story, concrete block maintenance shops. These steel towers have four steel posts encased in reinforced concrete and secured in footings. Between the posts are additional steel framing members and trusses. Spanning between the towers are roof trusses that are composed of cross-braced, arched steel members that provide lateral stabilization. The west and east walls have steel posts with cross bracing.

The four maintenance shops housed various functions, including a tire shop and tool bins. The west-end maintenance shop housed a utility room and had several additions that were torn down in the late 1980's or early 1990's. This area once housed a FB-111 flight simulator and missile assembly shop offices that were used in conjunction with the Atlas Missile program in the 1960's. Off the south wall of this maintenance shop are floor tiles that denote where a restroom was once located.

The east-end maintenance shop was used as an aircraft wash rack. This shop, which was a restricted area, is partially enclosed with corrugated metal partition walls.

**Alterations/Additions**

Building No. 2763 has incurred additions over time, most of which have subsequently been removed. Otherwise, it remains in essentially the same configuration as when originally constructed.

## **Function**

The Maintenance Hanger was used for the repair and maintenance of all aircraft at the base. The overall design of this building is representative of the scale and scope of maintenance hangars required by the Air Force to service and maintain its aircraft fleet. Within the cavernous interior, space was allotted not only for maintenance and repair, but for shop and support functions as well.

## **Significance**

The end of World War II saw the beginning of hostile relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, based on differing social, economic, and political views. As this "Cold War" escalated, the United States instituted a policy of containment, which called for a "peaceful" blocking of the expansion of Soviet political and economic influence. Nuclear weapons, which had also developed at the end of World War II, held a significant place in this conflict, but it was theorized that an American nuclear capability, if strong enough, could deter unwanted Soviet expansion.

On March 21, 1946, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was organized as one of the three new major commands in a reorganized Army Air Force. SAC was considered the "big stick" of U.S. National military strength, and was given the responsibility of delivering the atomic weapons. With the motto "Peace is our Profession" SAC was the physical realization of America's deterrence theory.

The newly established Air Force (established in 1947) embarked upon an expansive Cold War building program to make SAC operable. Air Force bases designated specifically for SAC were identified (or newly constructed) and became the critical instrument in SAC's mission of posing a significant deterrent to enemy aggression. Task-specific facilities were constructed at each of these installations, among the more unique and identifiable, from a standpoint of scale, was the Maintenance Hangar.

Building No. 2763 was employed for the maintenance of aircraft including the B-47, B-52 and FB-111A bombers, as well as the KC-135 tankers. This building type is common to Air Force installations which support flight operations by large aircraft and is based on a standard plan. Examples of these sizes of DC hangars exist at Castle AFB, California; Loring AFB, Maine; Carswell AFB, Texas; and Travis AFB, California. Smaller (medium) versions are known to exist at March AFB, California; Edwards AFB, California; Hanscomb AFB, Massachusetts; and Homestead AFB, Florida. As such, Building No. 2763 was instrumental to both the SAC and Plattsburgh AFB missions.

## **Drawings**

Copies of as-built drawings for the Maintenance Hangar, Building No. 2763, are archived at:

Air Force Historical Research Agency/ISA  
600 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6424

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**Sources**

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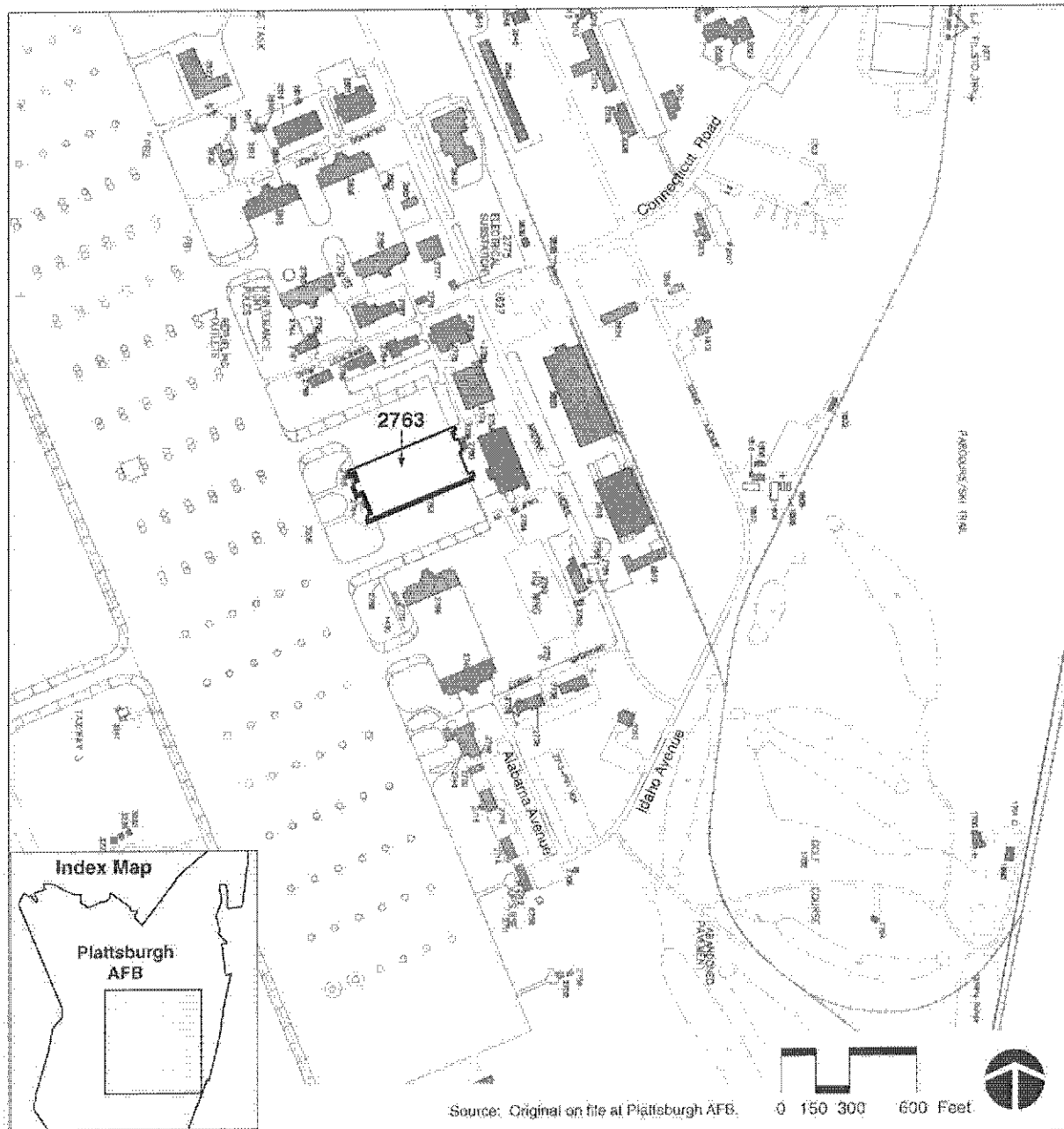
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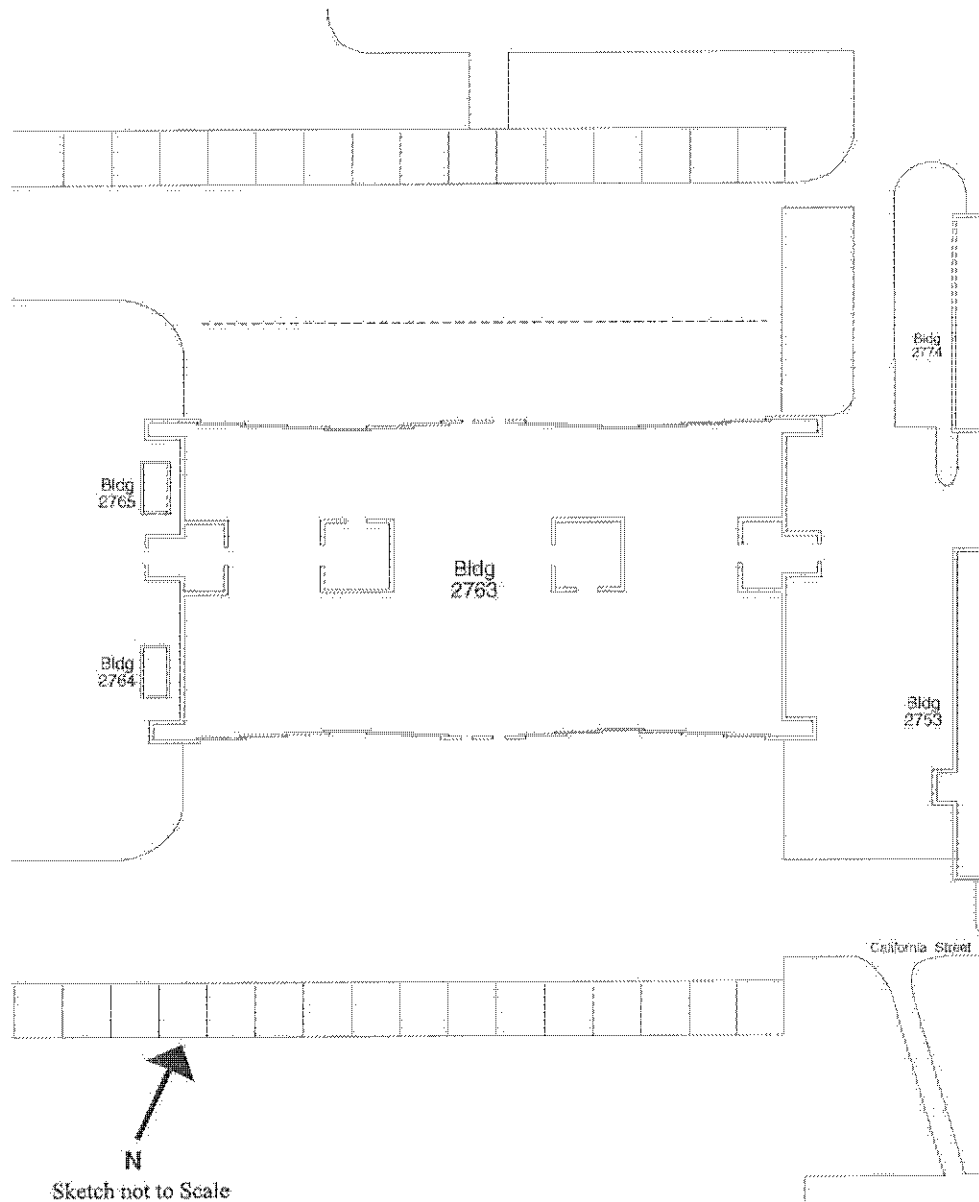
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Location Map for Maintenance Hangar, Building No. 2763  
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SKETCH PLAN – MAINTENANCE HANGAR  
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 2763)  
(Source: Plattsburgh AFB CAD File, Prepared by the United States Air Force, ca 2000)  
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